



M E D I A R E L E A S E

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR TENNESSEE FARMLAND LEGACY CONFERENCE

- Farmers and Community Planners will discuss farm preservation options -

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Registration is now open for the Tennessee Farmland Legacy Conference. The conference will take place on November 11-12 at the Music Road Hotel and Convention Center in Pigeon Forge, Tenn. Farmers, landowners and community leaders will have the opportunity to learn about protecting and growing today's farms for tomorrow's families and communities.

"Tennessee's farmland acres have continued to decline," said state Agriculture Commissioner Terry J. Oliver. "The Farmland Legacy Partnership is working to bring stakeholders together to help preserve this valuable resource."

The conference will include presentations on farm estate planning, profitability and timber management for landowners and planning techniques that protect farmland while enhancing economic growth for community leaders. Presenters will explain how communities and farmers can benefit from working together.

Discussion topics will include tools for protecting farmland, incentives for forest landowners, as well as other agriculture and community issues affecting today's farmers. Some of the speakers scheduled to present are Ron Hanson from the University of Nebraska and Peggy Kirk Hall from the Center for Farmland Policy Innovation, Ohio State University.

There are many factors contributing to the loss of farms and farmland in the state including the loss of Tennessee's tobacco industry, higher production costs, natural disasters and development pressures. According to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, the number of Tennessee farms in 2008 totaled 79,000, down 8,000 since 2003. Land in farms decreased during the same period from 11.5 million acres to 10.9 million acres, for an average annual loss of 100,000 acres.

The conference is being hosted through the Tennessee Farmland Legacy Partnership. Members include the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Cumberland Region Tomorrow, MTSU Center for Historic Preservation, Tennessee Department of Economic

and Community Development, Tennessee Department of Environment & Conservation, Tennessee Department of Tourist Development, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation, The Land Trust for Tennessee, The University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and USDA Rural Development.

Participants can register online at www.farmlandlegacy.org or by calling 865-974-0280.

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